

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 AEC-05 OES-03 ACDA-05 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9025

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 0627

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AS, IT

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO ITALY

SUMMARY: AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM VISITED ROME JANUARY 8-9. DISCUSSIONS WITH ITALIAN LEADERS CENTERED ON URANIUM SUPPLY AND EMIGRATION, WITH LIMITED EXCHANGES ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. DURING THE VISIT, AN AUSTRALIAN-ITALIAN CULTURAL AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING A BRIEF TWO DAY STOP IN ROME, AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM MET WITH PRESIDENT LEONE, PRIME MINISTER MORO, FOREIGN MINISTER RUMOR, BUDGET MINISTER ANDREOTTI AND MINISTER FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH PEDINI. ACCORDING TO BOTH FOREIGN MINISTRY AND AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY SOURCES, VISIT WAS ESSENTIALLY ROUTINE IN NATURE, WITH WHITLAM SEEING IT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AND TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH VARIOUS EUROPEAN LEADERS. HE ALSO USED OCCASION TO PUSH QUESTION OF AUSTRALIAN ACCESS TO EUROPEAN MARKETS FOR THEIR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, PARTICULARLY MEAT. FOR THEIR PART, ITALIANS WERE ANXIOUS TO CLARIFY QUESTIONS PERTAINING  
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TO EMIGRATION OF THEIR NATIONALS TO AUSTRALIA AND TO THE PURCHASE OF URANIUM FROM AUSTRALIA.

3. ON EMIGRATION QUESTION, ITALIANS ASKED FOR AUSTRALIAN EXPLANATION OF CURRENT RESTRICTIVE IMMIGRATION POLICY. WHILE UNDERSTANDING AUSTRALIAN NEEDS TO CONTROL IMMIGRATION IN THE FACE OF GROWING UNEMPLOYMENT, THEY ASKED THAT AUSTRALIANS PROCESS CASES INVOLVING REUNIFICATION OF FAMILY UNITS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE AND GIVE PRIORITY CONSIDERATION TO OTHER ITALIAN APPLICATIONS AS THE ECONOMIC SITUATION PERMITS. AT THE SAME TIME THE ITALIANS ASKED THE AUSTRALIANS TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS ON A BILATERAL SOCIAL SECURITY AGREEMENT, GIVEN THE CONTINUING FLOW OF ITALIAN WORKERS TO AND FROM AUSTRALIA.

4. ON THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE OF OBTAINING A FIRM AUSTRALIAN COMMITMENT FOR THE SUPPLY OF URANIUM, THE ITALIANS FAILED TO ACHIEVE THEIR AIM. WHITLAM EXPLAINED TO THEM THAT AUSTRALIAN POLICY ON THE EXPORTATION OF URANIUM ORE HAS NOT YET BEEN ESTABLISHED, BUT HE DID ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WOULD RECEIVE THE SYMPATHETIC AND EQUAL CONSIDERATION ALONG WITH AUSTRALIA'S OTHER MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS.

4. ACCORDING TO STATE-CONTROLLED OIL COMPANY ENI, ITALY IS TO PRESENT A PACKAGE DEAL IN MARCH 1975 COVERING (A) ITALIAN REQUIREMENTS FOR URANIUM, (B) ITALIAN PROPOSAL RE CONSTRUCTION AND TECHNOLOGY FOR AN AUSTRALIAN URANIUM ENRICHMENT FACILITY AND (C) PROPOSALS RELATING TO CURRENT ENI/AUSTRALIAN EXPLORATION EFFORTS. AN EARLY AUSTRALIAN COMMITMENT TO SUPPLY URANIUM OXIDE (YELLOWCAKE) IS NECESSARY FOR ENI TO PROGRAM URANIUM PURCHASES NEEDED FOR ITALIAN ELECTRICAL AUTHORITY ENEL. ENI BELIEVES THAT DUE TO PRIOR ITALIAN COMMITMENT TO EURODIF, ITALIAN PARTICIPATION IN AN AUSTRALIAN ENRICHMENT PROJECT WOULD GENERATE POLITICAL PROBLEMS STEMMING FROM TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND PROBABLE NEED TO PURCHASE PART OF ANY EVENTUAL AUSTRALIAN OUTPUT. ENI FEELS THE WHITLAM VISIT WAS USEFUL IN COUNTERING THE NEGATIVE ATTITUDE OF AUSTRALIAN ENERGY MINISTER CONNOR REEXPLOITATION OF URANIUM WHICH MIGHT BE DISCOVERED THROUGH ENI DIRECT OR JOINT-VENTURE EFFORTS. COMMENT: A REVIEW OF ENEL ENRICHMENT URANIUM SUPPLY PROGRAM DOES NOT REVEAL ANY POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES WERE THEY TO BE DENIED AUSTRALIAN URANIUM. END COMMENT.

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5. ACCORDING TO AUSTRALIAN DCM GATE, WHITLAM DID NOT REPORT THE AUSTRALIAN SUPPLY OF URANIUM TO ITALIAN RATIFICATION OF NPT. HE DID, HOWEVER, MENTION THAT URANIUM SUPPLY WOULD PROBABLY BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH IAEA SAFEGUARDS. GATE ALSO NOTED THAT BUDGET MINISTER ANDREOTTI TOLD WHITLAM THAT ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD MOVE FORWARD WITH NPT RATIFICATION AT AN EARLY DATE. (COMMENT: GIVEN HIS PRESENT POSITION, EMBASSY FINDS IT STRANGE THAT ANDREOTTI WOULD SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NPT. END COMMENT.)

6. ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, WHITLAM NOTED DETERIORATING POSITION IN SOUTH VIETNAM WHERE, HE STATED, THIEU CONTINUES TO LOSE POPULARITY AND SUPPORT. WHITLAM BELIEVES COMMUNISTS WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE GRADUAL GAINS AGAINST SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES, AND HE THINKS IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE SAIGON WILL BE ISOLATED. ON CHINA, WHITLAM DOUBTED THAT PEKING HAS EXPANSIONIST AIMS AGAINST TAIWAN, AND HE OBSERVED THAT HE VIEWS WITH SCEPTICISM PREDICTIONS OF A CHINESE-SOVIET CONFLICT.

7. DURING THE VISIT WHITLAM AND MORO SIGNED A ROUTINE CULTURAL AGREEMENT. VOLPE

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PFOR, AS, IT, (WHITLAM, E GOUGH)  
**To:** STATE  
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